

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-10 and 12-17 are all of the claims pending in the application.

I. Response to Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3-10 and 12-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,211,133 to Taguchi. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

Taguchi was filed November 18, 2003, and published August 12, 2004. On the other hand, the present application is a national stage application of PCT/JP03/04348 filed April 4, 2003. Therefore, the present application has an effective U.S. filing date of April 4, 2003, which is prior to the November 18, 2003 filing date, and the August 12, 2004 publication date, of Taguchi. For this reason, Taguchi is not prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) or §102(a) against the present claims.

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

II. Conclusion

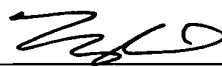
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (202) 452-7932 at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____


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